

REMARKS

A first Office Action was mailed on September 21, 2004. Claims 1 - 38 are pending in the present application. With this response, Applicant cancels claims 3, 11, 21 and 30 without prejudice or disclaimer, amends claims 1, 4, 10, 13, 19, 22, 28, 31, 37 and 38, and adds new claim 39. No new matter is introduced.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 – 3, 5 – 12, 14 – 21, 23 – 30 and 32 - 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,219,062 to Matsuo et al. Applicant cancels claims 3, 10, 21 and 30 and 10 without prejudice or disclaimer, amends claims 1, 4, 10, 13, 19, 22, 28, 31, 37 and 38, and respectfully traverse the rejection.

In amended independent claim 1, Applicant discloses:

1. A drawing method, comprising the steps of:

setting a value for expressing distance from a virtual viewpoint to every predetermined compositional unit of a first image;

generating a second image;

defining a coefficient corresponding to the value for expressing the distance set to every predetermined compositional unit, wherein the coefficient is defined using a predetermined byte when the value for expressing the distance for every predetermined compositional unit is composed of at least three bytes; and

synthesizing the first image and the second image based on the coefficient defined for every predetermined compositional unit.

(Emphasis Added)

Matsuo discloses a three-dimensional graphical display device that calculates fog coefficients for fogging pixel data (see, e.g., abstract of Matsuo). Matsuo suggests that the number of bits used for a blend coefficient, used for setting a degree of transparency

for a pixel as a function of a Z value, can be equivalent to the number of bits used for the Z value (see, e.g., column 7, lines 37 – 56 of Matsuo). Matsuo further suggests that this number can be 16 bits. Unlike Applicant's claimed invention as claimed in claim 1, Matsuo fails to disclose or suggest that a predetermined byte of the distance value is used for providing the coefficient, when the distance value is at least three bytes.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Matsuo, and is therefore allowable. Applicants apply essentially the same arguments as to amended independent claims 10, 19, 28, 37 and 38, which incorporate claim limitations similar to those of amended independent claim 1 as to the nature of the distance value and the blend coefficient. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 10, 19, 28, 37 and 38 are thereby also allowable. As claims 2, 4 – 9, 11, 13 – 18, 20, 22 – 27, 29 and 31 – 36 each depend from one of allowable claims 1, 10, 19 and 28, Applicant further submits that claims 2, 4 – 9, 11, 13 – 18, 20, 22 – 27, 29 and 31 – 36 are allowable for at least this reason.

NEW CLAIM

Applicant adds new claim 39, which essentially combines the limitations of claims 1, 6 and 7.

In new claim 39, Applicant discloses:

39. A drawing method, comprising the steps of:

setting a value for expressing distance from a virtual viewpoint to every predetermined compositional unit of a first image;

generating a second image;

defining a coefficient corresponding to the value for expressing the distance set to every predetermined compositional unit; and

synthesizing the first image and the second image based on the coefficient defined for every predetermined compositional unit;

wherein the second image is generated by subjecting the first image to a predetermined image processing that is blurring.

For example, as described with reference to Applicant's FIG. 7, a pixel engine 6 first draws a current image as the first image, generates the second image as a "blurred" image of the current image, reads a coefficient value for each pixel as a function of the distance from a from a reference point, and blends the current image with the blurred image in accordance with it associated coefficient (see, e.g., page 16, line 18 through page 17, line 23 of Applicant's specification). As can be seen with reference to FIGs. 8 – 10, the first image dominates the blend at distances close to the reference point, and the second image dominates at distances that are far from the current reference point (see, e.g., page 17, line 24 through page 20, line 5 of Applicant's specification). This processing in effect creates a "depth of field" effect, where images close to the reference point appear to be in focus, and images fare from the reference point appear to be out of focus or blurred. This process is quite distinct from the process disclosed by Matsuo, in which a standard color and a fog color are blended to produce a fog effect. Unlike Applicant's claimed invention, Matsuo fails to disclose or suggest blending two images, one image of which is first subjected to blurring.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 39 is not anticipated by Matsuo, and is therefore allowable.

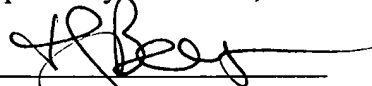
CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1, 2, 4 – 11, 13 – 20, 22 – 29, and 31 - 39, consisting of independent claims 1, 10, 19, 28 and 37 - 39, and the claims dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance. Passage of

this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he or she is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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